Military help for Sri Lanka

1571. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received a specific request from the Sri Lankan Government for military help in the second week of October, 2009;

(b) if so, the response of Government to this request;

(c) whether it is a fact that Indian Army went on a high alert after this request; and

(d) the details of this request and Governments' response?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. M. KRISHNA): (a) No.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

Transit journey across Bangladesh

1572. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of development that Government has made in achieving positive results for evolving an agreement between Bangladesh and India on transit journey across Bangladesh;

(b) by when it is likely that the system would come into force; and

(c) the status of mutual discussion in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): (a) to (c) During the visit of Foreign Minister of Bangladesh in September, 2009, both sides discussed issues relating to connectivity. In this context, both sides discussed designating Ashuganj as a new port of call under Article-23 of the Inland Water Transit and Trade Agreement as well as the use of Chittagong port by India. Bangladesh agreed to provide access to Ashuganj Port to facilitate the transportation of the Over Dimensional Consignments for the Palatana Power Project in Tripura.

Haj pilgrims using MP quota

1573. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Haj pilgrims that used the special quota of MPs in the year 2009;

(b) whether there is any discrimination in that quota; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SHASHI THAROOR): (a) A total number of 6014 seats have been allotted to Hon'ble Members of Parliament for Haj 2009. Efforts are made to allocate seats to each Member of Parliament requesting for the